



"The Church remembers that Africa offered a place of refuge for the Holy Family when they were fleeing the murderous political power of Herod, in search of a land that could offer them security and peace. The Church will continue to make her voice heard and to campaign for the defence of all people." *Africae Munus n°85*

Personal reflection and community sharing

At the end of the day take time to share in community on one or other of the following questions.

Our world is sick. It suffers from a lack of humanity, morality and ethics. It is blind and deaf to the suffering and needs of migrants, refugees, victims of human trafficking, the poor....

- What kind of reception do migrants receive in my country, my city, my community ?
- How do I look upon these 'strangers' : migrants, refugees, victims of human trafficking? What is my attitude?
- What can I do to better receive, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees in our society ?
- What more can I do to combat human trafficking ?

Sent on mission to another country, we are migrants.

Or : We are and have also been, migrants on mission in another country.

- What do I remember from this experience? Have I suffered and why? How was my faith challenged? What did I learn from this experience?
- What step does God call me to take this Advent in order to change my vision of the the other 'who is different'? What is the step that God invites us to make as a community? I should not forget that the first existential periphery is my community !

Recollection for Advent 2017

MSOLA and MAFR

We too, we are migrants!



"...Like Abraham, Moses, Joseph and Mary, Jesus was a migrant... We are all migrants, we are called to go from the earth to the Father..."

The time of Advent

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation to welcome God who comes into our world. He comes to live in us and with us and invites us to collaborate in the coming of the Kingdom of God. He dreams of building this world for all! Will we welcome Him?

In anticipation of the birth of Jesus, each one of us is invited to change his way of thinking and work to promote the dignity of all human beings wherever they are. The migrant is knocking at our door....

How do we welcome them? **The "foreigner", a messenger of God,** surprises and disrupts the routine of daily life by bringing what is distant close to us.

In "strangers", the Church sees Christ "pitching his tent among us" (Jn 1:14) and who "knocks at our door" (Rev 3:20). The letter to the Hebrews insists "Persevere in fraternal love. Do not forget hospitality, because in exercising it, some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Heb 13:2)

We too are migrants!

We are all moving forward following the chosen people. The Bible is studied with stories of migration: we are carried along on our pilgrim way today by the Word of God, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35).

May Faith and Hope nourish our ways; let fraternity be the source of our attention for vulnerable people but also for all those who are happy and integrated in the country they have chosen and where they wish to live their faith with confidence.

Elements of reflection:

It is Advent...! Mary and Joseph set out for Bethlehem..., like their distant ancestors Abraham and Moses, they too belong to a migrant people. They are on the move, knowing exile and wondering about their future. Jesus is born far away from home. After the massacre of the children by Herod, the parents of Jesus fled Bethlehem and take refuge in Egypt. On their return, the family settled in Galilee. During his ministry, Jesus goes to Phoenicia (Lebanon) and Trachonitis (Syria).

Jesus, considered as an outsider, will hardly be tolerated in Judea. Jesus, with his apostles, will teach, comfort, heal and announce his message of the Kingdom of God, before being arrested in Jerusalem and then crucified. **Jesus was a Galilean who became a migrant in Egypt and in Judaea.**

"Setting off on the road" is the experience of Mary and Joseph that so many millions of people, all over the world, live today. They are forced to leave their 'home' to go elsewhere.

Advent is an invitation to get started personally and in community.

- Meeting Jesus, the 'small newborn' in our brothers and sisters.
- Intensify our relationship with Emmanuel, "God with us."
- Discover those who relive the experience of Mary, Joseph and Jesus as displaced persons, political and economic migrants or refugees.
- Express our compassion and solidarity with them.

Texts for prayer and reflection

Lc 2:1-5

Now it happened that at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be made of the whole inhabited world. This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee for Judaea, to David's town called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Ex 3:7-10

Yahweh then said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying for help on account of their taskmasters. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. And I have come down to rescue them from the clutches of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that country, to a country rich and broad, to a country flowing with milk and honey, to the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. Yes indeed, the Israelites' cry for help has reached me, and I have also seen the cruel way in which the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now I am sending you to Pharaoh, for you to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.'

Lv 19:34

You will treat resident aliens as though they were native-born and love them as yourself—for you yourselves were once aliens in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018

"Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (Mt 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church's motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future. This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that "our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate"